ABOUT THE STATE RESULTS

Student Participation

- Data from the 2002 physical fitness test were reported for 90 percent of students in grade 5, 83 percent of students in grade 7, and 68 percent of students in grade 9 for a total of 1, 265,546 students.

The gender and ethnic composition of the student population participating in physical fitness testing are presented in Tables 1 and 2.

District Participation

Data was collected from approximately 92 percent of school districts. This high participation rate can be attributed to:

- increased training opportunities
- several computerized data collection options
- increased visibility of the physical fitness test
- follow-up letters sent to delinquent schools who failed to report data in 2001

State Results: Percent of Students in HFZ for Each Fitness Task

The percentage of students in the healthy fitness zone (HFZ) for each fitness task is reported in the Table 3. A student not in the fitness zone did not met the minimum level of fitness for that fitness task. As this section of the table shows, for every fitness task, a significant percentage of students did not meet minimum fitness levels. A summary of Table 3 is as follows:

- Aerobic capacity: only 48-57 percent of students were in the HFZ across all grades,
- Body composition: only 65-66 percent of students were in the HFZ across all grades,
- Abdominal strength: 78-81 percent of students were in the HFZ across all grades,
- Trunk extension strength: 80-86 percent of students were in the HFZ across all grades,
- Upper body strength: only 61-63 percent of students were in the HFZ across all grades,
- Flexibility only 64-69 percent of students were in the HFZ across all grades

State Results: Percent of Students Achieving Six, Five, Four, Three, Two, One or None of the Six Fitness Standards

Table 4 reports the number of fitness standards achieved (from one to six of the standards). Achievement of the fitness standards is based upon a test score falling in the HFZ. Each of the six tasks measures a different aspect of fitness. Since the fitness standard (HFZ) represents minimal levels of satisfactory achievement on the tasks, a student must meet all of the fitness standards before he or she is considered fit. Only students meeting six of six fitness standards can be considered fit for their grade level. Table 4 shows that most of the students tested did not demonstrate fitness. Only 22 percent of students in grade five, 26 percent in grade seven, and 23 percent in grade nine met six fitness standards. The columns in table 4 that display the percentage of students

achieving 5, 4, 3, 2, 1, or no standards indicate how much improvement would be needed before the students could be considered fit.

Subgroup Data

Subgroup data are presented in tables 5 – 15. Table 5 shows that in grades 5 and 7, more females than males met all six fitness standards, but in grade 9, more males than females achieved the six standards. Across all grade levels, more females than males were in the HFZ for flexibility, body composition, and trunk extension strength, but more males than females were in the HFZ for abdominal strength and upper body strength.

Although no racial/ethnic group exhibited high levels of fitness, subgroup results in table 9-15 showed significant differences among ethnic groups. Results for Asian/Asian American and White (not of Hispanic origin) subgroup showed the highest percent of students meeting all of the fitness standards, while the Hispanic/Latino and African/African American subgroups had the lowest. The difference between subgroups who had the highest percent of students meeting all standards and subgroups who had the fewest achieving that goal was approximately 10 percent in grade 5, 13 percent in grade 7 and 13 percent in grade 9.

Summary

Three years of data show that most students at all three grade levels are not fit when compared to standards established by the Cooper Institute for the *Fitnessgram*, a measurement of fitness levels which is used nationally. Although there was a 1 percent increase overall in number of students considered fit, there is still much work to do to ensure high levels of fitness for all students in California. Both males and females from all ethnic backgrounds could benefit from a greater emphasis on all areas of physical fitness, especially aerobic capacity, body composition, upper body strength and flexibility. Once again, districts and schools are encouraged to use the data from this test to examine their physical education programs and plan improvements in their current programs.

This is only the third time in thirteen years that quality data about fitness of California's youth has been reported. Full and complete public access to these data will be available via Internet, providing reports for every county, district and school. Teachers, parents, and administrators will have the opportunity to examine the fitness levels of their children on an annual basis and use this information to make important changes. The newly-completed research study by the California Department of Education provides concrete evidence that the student who is physically educated and fit has the ability to achieve academically.